

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2539

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJ: SOVIET REACTION TO NIXON PARDON

USIA FOR IBS, IEE, IPS

1. SUMMARY. THOUGH SOVIET MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE NIXON PARDON HAS BEEN SPARCE, ANALYSIS OF THIS COVERAGE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED BY EMBASSY CONTACTS LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT SOVIET INTERPRETATION OF THE PARDON LEANS TOWARD SUSPICION THAT IT WAS ARRANGED BEFORE NIXON DEPARTURE FROM THE WHITE HOUSE.
END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET MEDIA REACTION TO THE PARDON OF RICHARD NIXON WAS VERY RESTRAINED IN DAYS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PRESIDENT FORD'S ANNOUNCEMENT. SOVIET CENTRAL PRESS CARRIED NOTHING MORE THAN A VERY SHORT ITEM ON SEPTEMBER 9 WITH SIMPLE STATEMENT THAT
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NIXON HAD BEEN PARDONED BY THE PRESIDENT UNDER POWERS GRANTED

BY THE CONSTITUTION.

3. SEPTEMBER 13 NOVOE VREMYA WENT INTO MORE DETAIL ON THE STORY. IT CITED THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE PARDON WAS "FULL, UNLIMITED, AND ABSOLUTE" FOR ANY "CRIMES (NIXON) COMMITTED OR MAY HAVE COMMITTED AGAINST THE UNITED STATES." ITEM EXPLAINED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED TO GRANT PARDON TO QUIET THE AFTEREFFECT OF WATERGATE AND TO SAVE NIXON FROM PUNISHMENT BEYOND THAT WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN METED OUT TO HIM. NIXON IS QUOTED ONLY AS HAVING REPLIED THAT HE HOPED THAT "THIS ACT OF COMPASSION WOULD REMOVE THE BURDEN OF WATERGATE FROM OUR COUNTRY." NOVOYE VREMYA COMMENTS THAT THE PARDON HAD DRAWN FORTH VARYING REACTIONS IN THE U.S., WITH VIEW IN CONGRESS SPLIT LARGELY ALONG BIPARTISAN LINES. IT ALSO NOTES THAT TERHORST HAD RESIGNED "AS A SIGN OF PROTEST" AGAINST THE PARDON.

4. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF SEPTEMBER 12, G.A. TROFIMENKO, HEAD OF THE FOREIGN POLICY DIVISION OF THE USA INSTITUTE, PROBED INSISTENTLY FOR EMBOFF'S OPINION ON WHETHER PARDON HAD BEEN RESULT OF AN AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND NIXON BEFORE NIXON'S RESIGNATION. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE HAD READ SPECULATION IN U.S. MEDIA BEFORE THE RESIGNATION THAT NIXON WOULD ATTEMPT TO COME TO SOME "ARRANGEMENT" TO ENSURE THAT HE WOULD ESCAPE PROSECUTION IF HE RESIGNED. TROFIMENKO OBVIOUSLY WAS QUITE CONVINCED THAT THIS HAD INDEED BEEN THE CASE. GIVEN THE SOVIET PREDILECTION FOR A CONSPIRATORIAL INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY, WE BELIEVE THAT THIS VIEW MAY BE WIDESPREAD IN SOVIET RULING AND ELITE CIRCLES.
DUBS

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